Effectiveness of the Business Environment in Supporting the Implementation of Public-Private Partnership Policies in Tanzania’s Education sector

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Abstract: This study investigated whether the Business Environment is effective in supporting the implementation of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) policies in Education in Tanzania. The study adopted the qualitative research technique whose data collection process included: documentary reviews and interviews. Three (3) semi-structured interviews were conducted involving five (5) officials from the Tanzania National Business Council (TBNC) and Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) officials. Findings indicated TBNC plays a leading Public-Private sector intermediary with the responsibility of coordinating and promoting the Public–Private Dialogue. Based on the TNBC experience, outstanding challenges were related to the negative mindsets on both sides of the Public-Private Dialogue (PPD), the uncoordinated approaches by the major players, and limited advocacy for PPP investment in education. It is therefore recommended that institutions like the TBNC need to increase their advocacy for the PPP policies in education in several ways including increasing the awareness of the PPP policies; increased training and capacity building for the various stakeholders before and after entering their respective PPP contractual obligations; establish information desks to serve as regular and sustainable contact points for the dissemination PPP policy guidelines and protocol.

Keywords: Institutions, Public Private Partnerships, Tanzania National Business Council, PPP in Education, Investment Environment, Business Environment

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This study investigated whether the business environment is effective in supporting the implementation of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) policies in education in Tanzania. At the heart of the Business Environment is the institutional support that involves the Public–Private Intermediaries in promoting the implementation of not only the PPP policies but also PPP projects. The Government of Tanzania (GoT) has emphasised the importance of urgently implementing the policies that foster greater private sector participation in the economy (URT 2016). The GoT has indicated its commitment to carrying out major reforms aimed at promoting good corporate governance and fostering service delivery including education, through the PPP model. Therefore there is a need to investigate and determine if the the existing business environment and the associated policies are ineffective in promoting the implementation of PPP policies in the education sector.

It is only appropriate that any inquiry into the effectiveness of the institutional set-up and organisational support to PPP investment policies starts with the TNBC, which was set up in 2001 as the highest consultative organ between the government and the private sector. Therefore, under this research, it was imperative to determine role institutions and organisational arrangements like TNBC play in creating an Enabling Business Environment for the implementation of the PPP policies with special attention to education. This research followed up on the conclusions of OECD (2013) that, Tanzania needed to improve on institutional coherence in the implementation of investment policies and regulations.

A Business Enabling Environment (BEE) helps to align the pre-current PPP policies with the overall objective of moving Tanzania towards industrialization for economic transformation and human development, as clearly set out in the second Five Year Development Plan document (FYDP II) (DCED 2008). According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (2019), the 2019/20 National Budget in Tanzania emphasized several macroeconomic objectives and targets notable of which, was objective (iii) that required improvements in the enabling environment for business and investment. An enabling business environment mainly involves the Construction and rehabilitation of various infrastructures for attracting private sector investment in the education sector.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Government of Tanzania (GoT) has indicated the awareness and need to strengthen the Business Enabling Environment (BEE) through its Blueprint for Regulatory Reforms to Improve the Business Environment, under the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (URT 2017). Unfortunately, it seems little progress has been registered so far, because according to the latest annual ratings of the World Bank (2019), Tanzania was ranked 141 among 190 economies in the ease of doing business index, which is an improvement from 144 in 2018. According to White(2010), even recent clarification and revisions made on the existing PPP policies are not enough without the proper coordination of the national organisational arrangements. This state of affairs casts a long shadow of doubt on the successful implementation of the
Second Five-year Development plan of 2016/17 to 2021/22 (FYDP II) whose theme is “Nurturing Industrialization for Economic Transformation and Human Development” (USAID 2018; URT 2016).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether the policy framework in Tanzania effectively supports the implementation of PPPs in the education sector. The study specifically, addressed three questions:

1.3.1 Objectives of the study

1. Find out the role of the organisational arrangements like TBNC in promoting favourable PPP policies in education in Tanzania.
2. Explore the views of the leaders at TNBC to find out the challenges policy changes pause on the implementation of PPP policies in education in Tanzania.
3. Use the experiences of various stakeholders to find out the solutions to the challenges faced in the implementation of PPP policies in education.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in a way that helps the policymakers and implementers in finding answers to the conflicting and contradictory PPP policy framework. The study is important because it addresses the challenges of certainty, and continuity in the PPP policy framework. Studying the Business Environment is important in promoting PPP policies in education and provides new insights into the working of public institutions that are responsible for enhancing the implementation of PPP policies (Ngowi 2005).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Business Environment

The DCED (2008) defines a business environment as a sub-set of the investment climate, consisting of a complex of policy, legal, institutional, and regulatory conditions that govern business activities. Furthermore, there are three broad sub-components of the national business environment including: the Policy, Legal and Regulatory Framework, which refers to the range of policies, laws and regulations that affect business owners; the Administrative Systems, which deals with the ways in which policies, laws and regulations are enforced, and includes issues such as governance; and National organisational arrangements (URT 2016, White, 2010). Government decisions may directly affect the business environment, both at national and local levels. Business environments can vary across sub-national jurisdictions. Business environments are also referred to as “local business environments” and within specific industry sectors, they are referred to as “sectoral business environments”.

2.2 An Investment Climate

The World Bank (2018) has defined the Investment climate as “the set of location-specific factors shaping the opportunities and incentives for firms to invest productively, create jobs, and expand”. The rule of law, the presence of open financial markets, economic predictability, infrastructure, political stability, efficient labour markets, and human resource development. However, unlike the “business environment”, the “investment environment” is beyond the control of the individual organisations and institutions (White, 2010).

Fig. 1 (White, 2013) shows how the institutional and organisational support can be mobilized to help the growth of private businesses and the associated PPPs. It illustrates the primacy of policy, legal and regulatory framework in creating and supporting a dependable National Business environment.

2.3 Tanzania National Business Council

This study of the Business Environment for the implementation of PPP policy mechanisms involves the study of organisation arrangements. As of necessity this study paid more attention to the “Presidential Investor Council”, also known as Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC). In addition, it is a statutory body with the responsibility of bringing together the public and private sector into a dialogue (URT, 2016; White, 2013; World Bank, 2010). According to the presidential circular number 1 of 2001, (URT, 2001), the TNBC was established with the mandate of bridging the investments gap between the public and the private sectors by supporting the Public-Private sector Dialogue. The National Business Council (TNBC) was launched in April 2001. It provides the main forum for public-private sector consultations on strategic issues of economic growth and development (Twaakyondo et al., 2002; URT 2001).
2.4 Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF)

One of the leading public-private sector intermediaries is the TPSF, which forms a strong embodiment of the TNBC by nominating the 20 members of the private sector that meet the government delegation of 20 members. It was formed in 1998, utilizing the experience spanning over 12 years in a market economy 1998, many Tanzanian companies came together to create the TPSF and iron out the differences within the private sector and to speak with one voice in dealing with the GoT. In the context of this study, the TPSF participated in the design of TNBC, while promoting private sector-led social and economic development, by representing the common interest of its members, and engaging in effective advocacy with the Tanzanian government.

2.5 Public Private Partnerships

The term PPP attracts different meanings stretching from participation and dialogue to the actual formation of a partnership between the public and private sectors. The PPP Act of 2017 defined a PPP as a contractual arrangement between a contracting authority and a private part in which the private party undertakes to perform for contracting authority function on behalf of the contracting authority for a specific period; assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risks in connection with the performance on behalf of the contracting authority function or use of government property; or receives a benefit for performing on behalf of contracting authority function or from utilizing the public property, (URT 2017, p.5).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach that involves collecting data based on personal experiences, introspection, unstructured and semi-structured interviews, and documentary analysis. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research as a research that focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings. The qualitative approach provided the researchers with in-depth knowledge and understandings of multiple perceptions of participants, in the context of the effectiveness of the institutional framework in implementing the PPP policies (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Stake 2010). The study was inspired by the phenomenological theory/paradigm to find out the perceptions, views and experiences of the stakeholders in the implementation of PPP policies in Tanzania.

3.1 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling under this qualitative study was done to purposefully whereby, participants with the relevant experiences were contacted, which helped the researchers understand the problem from the perspective of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Under the purposeful sampling strategy, four (4) senior officials at both the Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC) and at the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF) were interviewed. TNBC officials were purposefully sampled because they are the only institution that has an active interface between the public and private sector on a regular basis.
3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from participants with first hand experiences the institutional set up that affects the implementation of PPPs in education in Tanzania. While using the documentary analysis and interviewing, the participants were asked to indicate their opinions on numerous issues that were used to trap and collect information relating to the research questions. The data collected through semi-structured interview was later subjected to thematic analysis by assigning codes to the insurgent issues, a when the saturation point was reached, a report was written.

IV. RESULTS

The qualitative findings from the interviews were triangled with the findings from the documentary analysis as reported below;

4.1 The Role of TNBC

In addressing the requirements of first research objective, it was determined that TNBC plays an important role in, promoting the creation of a favourable Business Enabling Environment (BEE), because it performs various roles including; Coordination and policy management, regulatory services, lobbying and advocacy, and advisory services.

4.1.1 Coordination

It was found that TNBC plays a central role in coordinating the activities of the various public-private stakeholders across the various investment clusters. TNBC helps build and mediate in an effective dialogue on issues relating to both the public and private sector organizations and other stakeholders. When asked the question: “From your experience what is your opinion about the work done in the implementation of PPP policies in education?” A senior official at TPSF answered that,

“We have done our level best to build a dialogue, including members from the private school owners association. It is not automatic that they must agree each time they meet, but listening to one another helps reduce the tensions and has helped increase trust”

This finding agrees with the other qualitative data obtained from the documentary analysis (Mnenwa&Maliti2009; URT 2017), which shows that TNBC is part of a deliberate effort by the GoT to bring clarity in the regulatory framework. The 5th government of Tanzania has re-affirmed its commitment to ensuring that regulatory hurdles towards a smooth PPD are removed. The work of the public-private sector intermediaries like the TNBC is to ensure that the private sector operates in a friendly and predictable business environment while the government maintains its regulatory role.

It was also found that much as the TSPF and TNBC are dichotomous entities, they are just two sides of the same coin. Any private sector player who wants to take part in the PPD must go through the TPSF and there is no other way around it.

When asked whether TSPF has a working desk within the TNBC one senior TSPF official said that;

Currently, we do not have a physical desk in TNBC but I am sure that our physical presence daily is welcome because there is a lot of work to do together, which includes the coordination of the working groups and the activities of the different investment clusters. Together, we gather inputs into the PPD and most of the policy proposals and discussions of the private education sector should be channelled through the TSPF.

4.1.2 Lobbying and advocacy

It was determined that TPSF plays the role of advocacy under TNBC for the streamlining and rationalization of taxes and levies, which ensures the active participation of the private sector in a favourable business environment. When asked about the work done to support an enabling business environment, a senior officer at the TPSF had this to say;

“We are currently advocating for the review of the tax policy. I have advocated that some services provided by the PPPs should be zero rated services as far as Value Added Tax (VAT) is concerned. For example education, transport and other services at the municipality level. We now have a problem at Dar-es-Salaam Rapid Transport (DART) where the charges exclude VAT but the project must pay, which is one of the areas that need to be studied...”

The above data is triangulated with other qualitative data from the documentary analysis. The Blueprint for Regulatory Reforms to Improve the Business Environment (URT 2017) indicates that the Stakeholders have complained about the increasingly conflicting and duplicative policies and laws at the central and local government levels relating to taxes, levies, licencing and other charges.

4.2 The challenges of implementing PPP policies in Tanzania

The second research objective of this study was to explore the views of the public-private sector stakeholders to find out the challenges faced in the implementation of PPP policies in Tanzania. It was determined that using the TNBC experience that outstanding challenges are faced when implementing PPP policies including;

4.2.1 Limited capacity of the PPP intermediaries

It was found that many PPP projects especially at the local government level lack the administrative, technical and scientific capacities to meet the conditions, which puts a serious strain in dealing with the public-private sector investment demands. When asked; “what is your view towards the challenges faced when designing and implementation of the PPP projects in education?” the official said;

“So far the there are no clear guidelines of what PPP models that can be followed whenever the government wants to enter...”
into a contract with the private sector. I am worried that the PPP NODE under the local government has not done enough to provide clear methods of engagement between the government and the private schools. If we have a good structure I am sure it will be easier to follow the best practice. The problem mainly arises from the lack of a method to evaluate the public benefit even if it isn't about the money...”

It was found out that there is limited capacity in the institutional framework to the extent that limited time is allocated to the established institution or policy to establish ground before another policy or office is created. One officer at TNBC exclaimed that;

“Can you believe that the recently established PPP centre in the Ministry of Finance and Planning, in now referred to as the PPP commission? I wonder whether it is due to the proficiency or a mere change of names without increasing their capacity”.

With a limited human resource capacity, having an effective institutional framework for the implementation of PPP policies is a remote possibility. “The process is changing the names but not the proficiency” said an officer at TPSF

4.2.2 Many Intermediaries parallelism

It was also determined that there are occasional overlapps and duplication of roles in the area of public – private sector intermediation. The multiplicity of the intermediaries creates a serious challenge towards the creation and promotion of an enabling business environment for the successful implementation of PPP policies not only in education but in other sectors. In addition, there is limited coordination between the institutional pillars that were put in place to facilitate the effective implementation of the PPP policies in Tanzania (UNCTAD 2011; Mnenwa Maliti 2009). Furthermore there are many public – private sector intermediaries including; the Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC) and the TPSF; the BEST program, and the National Investment Steering Committee (NISC). When asked “what is the relationship between your organisation and other PPP intermediary bodies? One senior official at TPSF had this to say;

“There is a contradiction in the supervision and implementation of PPP projects. On top of the task force under the Ministry of Finance and Planning, there is also the parliamentary committee on PPPs that can review a PPP project at any time with the mandate to make drastic changes. Furthermore we have the Ministerial platform, the think tank, the East African community Platform, the National Tourism Board and others....

The Blueprint for Regulatory Reforms to Improve the Business Environment URT 2017) registers similar concerns over the multiple regulatory agencies with seemingly similar roles and functions have also raised concern from a cross section of stakeholders. In addition there was a need to clear the confusion between the role played by the President’s and the Prime Minister’s office when it comes to PPP intermediation. It was feared that the overlap adds to the problem of multiple players in a crowded field of intermediation. When asked in a follow-up question as to which office does the TNBC fall under between the President’s and the Prime Minister’s office, a senior official at TNBC said that;

“AtTNBC we report to the President’s office. Unfortunately, the president’s office does not have a budgetary vote because it is not an independent government ministry. Instead we obtain the funding and other resources from the Prime Minister’s office, but there is no confusion like some people believe”

4.2.3 Political influence and considerations

This study found that the effectiveness of such policies can been greatly reduced by the erratic and impromptu actions or inactions by the some politicians and local government leaders. When asked to explain the interface between the organisation and the local PPP projects, one senior official at TPSF said that:

“.I would suggest that some decisions should not be made basing on political gains. Instead, like the government has called out, it should be for the good of the projects. It is important to protect the current PPPs so that they can generate enough money to run profitably and pay for depreciation....?”

It was determined that the negative political influence is mainly felt at the local government level where lack of uniformity in charges across for the same services under the different LGA authorities. One senior officer at TNBC exclaimed that;

“Can you imagine one local government official prevented the allocation of a small piece of land to put up a toilet for a school in one of the municipalities where we run projects because of the differences on opinion based political party affiliation”?

It was determined that PPPs at the local level are struggling and are not sustainable. Most of the politicians are only using such projects to justify their election. Projects are in the hands of people least interested in their efficacy and viability. To emphasise the point of the interface between their organisation and the local PPP projects the official added;

“Theavailable fundingmechanisms like the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) should focus on building the infrastructure. The projects need supervision and active management before looking at the monetary returns. The private partners should be given enough time to recover their costs and the government should most appreciate the service that has been provided,”
4.4.4 Lack of trust

It was discovered that contrary to the GoT’s efforts to increase the cooperation between the public and private sectors; instead the mistrust has grown. The Blueprint (URT2017) was set out as a benchmark to show the GoT’s commitment to increasing the trust and confidence that has been lacking between the public and private sector stakeholders. Addressing the challenges of mutual mistrust and how far the parties have gone solving it, one senior officer at TSPF had this to say;

“It’s unfortunate that up to now we have not been able to hammer out long-term PPP projects, which this is because most of the participants in the dialogue are more concerned about short run than long run projects.”

It was determined that effectiveness of the institutional framework in implementing PPP polices is limited by the growing mistrust between the public and private sector. The private sector stakeholders are not yet willing to commit their hard won resources into long-term projects with the government. While responding to the questions seeking the opinions on the reasons why the PPD has not yet produced a long-term PPP, a senior officer at TSPF said that;

“Amendments made last year made the PPP agreements subject to local courts arbitration. The PPP policies in Tanzania are attractive but care should be taken when introducing measures that might reduce the confidence of foreign partners in the local courts. Otherwise this might drive away the potential private partners.

The officer’s contribution was supported by the qualitative data from the documentary analysis, whereby according to the (World Bank 2018): “The private sector continues to struggle with recent legislation that is vague and often punitive to the private sector. This mutual suspicion between the two sectors looms over the prospect of creating and promoting a favourable investment climate although the GoT has a renewed commitment to engage in the public private dialogue and address challenges in the business environment. It is even more re-assuring that President Magufuli named 2019 “the year of investment” and as such has made many high-profile remarks highlighting the importance of the private sector.

4.5 Solutions to the Challenges Faced in Promoting PPP Policies

The third research objective of this study was to find out the solutions to the challenges faced in the implementation of PPP policies. The research explored the experiences of various stakeholders and used the documentary analysis to find the possible solutions to the challenges as reported in the findings below;

4.5.1 Human Capacity Building and Education

It was discovered that the effectiveness of the institutional framework in implementing PPP policies can be improved by increasing the human resource capacity of the major actors. In addition, this can be done through in-house training and other pedagogical methods. According to The Investment Policy Review (OECD, 2013), recommended that “Companies, in this case PPP intermediaries, should increase existing in-house training programmes for staff, as well as to offer training opportunities over and above the immediate workplace training needs”. In addition the IPR (OECD 2013) proposed that to improve the effectiveness of the training and capacity building, all training must, as of necessity, actively include the private sector. Failure to include the private sector produce appropriately trained officers.

4.5.2 Networking and Linkage programmes

It was determined that there is a need to increase collaborative work between the various PPP intermediaries especially in the education sector. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews showed that majority of the participants emphasised the need to work together. When making his contribution, a senior official at TNBC said that;

“All of us are doing our best in promoting a dialogue between the two sectors in the education sector. Unfortunately, some things are done when we are not aware of what other parties are doing. We must keep each other informed and if possible work together”

This finding is similar to the analysis in the Tanzania Investment Report (URT, 2018), which identified the need to increase the linkage programme between different actors in the different sectors. Such a linkage programme improves the skills of Tanzanian workers.

4.5.3 Increasing the advocacy

Sharing more information about the benefits of PPP investment will go a long way to eliminate the ignorance by the two parties. Information desks and similar task forces should be put in selected areas where the two parties mostly meet. To strengthen this argument, USAID (2018) stresses that;

“on top of the education sector, the Government, in collaboration with the private sector should allocate more resources through the public -private partnership for providing the necessary infrastructure in the areas earmarked for export processing zones for attracting investments geared to adding value to agriculture produce.”

Such a protracted awareness dispels the fears and suspicions that have delayed, and in some cases limited the effectiveness PPD.

4.5.4 Special Purpose Vehicles

It was determined that one way of dealing with trust and management concerns over the PPP projects is to put up special purpose vehicles. A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is a private firm or consortium of private firms undertaking the
project typically representing the interests of both the public and private sector (UNACTAD 2011).

When responding to the question, “How can the challenges of managing projects be overcome? A senior TPSF official said; “There is a need for establishing an agency to oversee the projects and it is important at a local government level because much as both parties would wish to independently run the project but experience shows that they cannot do it properly. I think it is important to enter into a special purpose vehicle, which would help mitigate all these problems and complaints I am not sure…”

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It was determined that there are many Public-Private sector intermediaries that have led to the duplication of efforts. Therefore, there is an urgent need to harmonize the different roles to reduce and better still, remove the disruptive overlaps that can have a serious handicap on the effective implementation of PPP policies in Tanzania (Mwapachu 2005). The efforts of the different intermediaries should focus on the recommendations of the government Blueprint. It provides a guide to the attainment of industrialization goals, in the shortest period possible.

It was discovered that there are serious inadequacies in the macroeconomic environment. Disagreements and uncertainties over taxation were highlighted as major sticking points in the successful implementation of PPP policies. Much us the focus of this study was on the business environment, matters relating to taxations fall under the docket of investment climate i.e. the fiscal policy of the broader macroeconomic policies. During the PPD, taxation rates and regimes should be discussed to improve the business environment.

 VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that further study a quantitative nature should be conducted as a way of generalizing the findings, and there is a need for more studies on how to improve the BEE in Tanzania. The establishment of a BEE is still held hostage by the still lingering traditional systems of service provision, with deep-rooted institutionalized suspicion against the education private sector and its intentions.

It is recommended that a central body preferably TNBC, should take charge of identifying priority investment areas, which will help avoid the kind of fragmented approach to the implementation of not only the PPP policies, but also the associated PPP projects. However, the elevated role of the TNBC should not be misunderstood to mean increased centralization and domination by the public sector. In addition, the education private sectors’ interests will be safeguarded, especially when TPSF that has a 50 percent stake in the PPD, which is enough to counter balance the feared public sector excesses.

It is further recommended that deliberate efforts should be spent towards the development of Well-coordinated National Arrangements that spell out the various roles and at what levels do the public and private stakeholders in the public-private dialogue. This recommendation agrees with the recommendations of the Blueprint (2017) which emphasises the need to increase capacity of accommodating the diversity of interest that results from the different businesses and individuals representing the various strategic priorities of the business community.
It is recommended that more efforts should be expended towards better PPP contract designing. The findings of this study that the work of contract design is still work in progress. Without proven and trusted mechanisms to draw contracts and ensure their implementation, the business environment will be ineffective in implementing the PPP education policies. It was found out more PPP education contracts are still being drawn for example the one with VETA. This situation becomes worse when the parties concerned are in disputes and contestations over the courts and their jurisdiction over the interpretation of the contracts (Mwapachu, 2005; Wangwe, 1999).

In conclusion, this research revealed that there are parallel intermediary efforts that wittingly or not contradictory. Consequently, it difficult to come up with a comprehensive business environment that effectively supports the implementation of PPP policies in education. The institutional set up in terms of rules, regulations and policies is filled with a multiplicity of actions and intentions. Rolling out more policies and regulations will add to the confusion. Unfortunately, the only workable solution is to bring more policies but this time, such policies should increase the coordination of the major PPP intermediaries.

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